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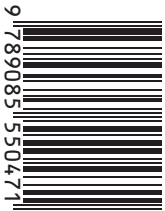
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In the Dutch late modern society, the presence of thriving new evangelical and Pentecostal churches is remarkable against the backdrop of the widespread decline of “traditional”, mainstream churches. Using an ethnographic approach, this book examines the experiences of newcomers to contemporary evangelicalism through the lens of two churches: an evangelical seeker church and a neo-Pentecostal, charismatic church. While both churches share an emphasis on conversion, there are substantial differences in their approach to and understanding of the Holy Spirit. By comparing the conversion experiences of newcomers with strategies of conversion employed by each church, this book sheds new light on the profound differences in orientation found within Dutch evangelicalism. Drawing upon theories of the body and embodiment, this qualitative, in-depth study departs from the notion that religion is limited to the mind, involving cognitively affirmed beliefs; conversely, it offers a semiotic approach to understanding religion that takes into account the importance of affects, emotions and desires in processes of conversion. This book also engages in an analytical comparison of the design and use of worship space, worship music and distinct language ideologies used by the two churches to stimulate conversion. It argues that the ways in which newcomers learn conversion, through the Alpha course, baptism and church participation, are anchored in embodied processes and, as such, imply a religious pedagogy of the senses. This study thus marks the need for a more sensorial and embodied approach to understand contemporary forms of Christianity in Dutch society.

Miranda Klaver (1962) completed her PhD at the Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology (Faculty of Social Science) of the VU University Amsterdam. She obtained her Masters degrees in Cultural Anthropology and Theology.

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Miranda Klaver

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*A Semiotic Perspective on Conversion
in an Evangelical Seeker Church and a
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